



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Dear Tribal Leaders:

We wish to inform you, and all federally recognized tribes in our Region about potential economic stimulus funds for tribal drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects, and inform you of the process EPA envisions for selecting and funding such projects. If an economic stimulus bill is enacted and signed by the President, it may add new requirements for these projects, or change the priorities or deadlines we describe below. If that happens, we will inform you of these changes. Thus, as part of our planning efforts for implementing any stimulus law, we are asking tribes to submit information regarding any projects which are not currently in the Indian Health Service (IHS) Sanitary Deficiency System (SDS) list related to the priorities discussed below. We respectfully ask you to submit this information to us as soon as possible but no later than February 24, 2009.

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I: Background: Congress is considering an economic stimulus bill that may include funding for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, and associated funding for the Clean Water Tribal Set-Aside (CWTSA) and Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside (DWTSA) programs. While, the exact amount of funds available, if any, is unknown at this time, funds for these programs could increase significantly over funding levels from previous years.

II: Funding Priorities and Award Process: We expect stimulus funds will be awarded for projects which can be implemented quickly and without significant delays in order to create jobs and stimulate the economy. To fulfill this objective, the priority for any CWTSA and DWTSA stimulus funds will support projects which can be carried out quickly and which decrease the number of tribal homes lacking access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation which the federal government tracks using the Indian Health Service data system. For the DWTSA, we anticipate that another priority will be to increase the population in Indian country served by community water systems that receive drinking water that meets all applicable health-based drinking water standards.

EPA and IHS plan to develop a list of projects to be funded under the stimulus plan based on the funding priorities mentioned above, using the IHS SDS list. Tribes may also submit to EPA for consideration any water infrastructure projects not included in the IHS SDS list that meet the funding priorities. Any projects submitted by tribes must be submitted to us and include the following information as well as any supporting documentation. Please limit your submittal to no more than two pages, excluding supporting documentation.

- Project name, location, number of tribal homes and population to be served
- Description of project need
- Project cost estimate

- Project description, including documentation of how the project will provide access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and, for drinking water projects, how the project will increase the population in Indian country served by community water systems that receive drinking water that meets all applicable health-based drinking water standards
- Evidence of project readiness to proceed, including planning and design documents
- Timeline for project implementation, including start and completion of planning, design and construction
- Endorsement of tribal chair or authorized representative.

We wish to receive this information by e-mail, mail or fax no later than February ¹⁶~~24~~, 2009.
Would you kindly submit this information to the applicable contact listed here:

Wastewater projects

Loretta Vanegas
CWTSa Coordinator
EPA, WTR-10
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
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e-mail: vanegas.loretta@epa.gov

Drinking Water projects


Linda Reeves
DWTSA Coordinator
EPA, WTR-6
75 Hawthorne Street
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We will then review all project proposals submitted by the February ¹⁶~~24~~th deadline and decide which projects will be selected for funding (based on the funding priorities described above, and the amount of funds available). Tribes will be notified of the results of the review process within 30 days of the selection decisions. Funding for all tribal projects nationwide will likely be awarded in two Interagency Agreements between EPA Headquarters and IHS Headquarters, one for CWTSa projects and the other for DWTSA projects.

III: Annual CWTSa and DWTSA Funds: In addition to any stimulus funds we hope to receive our regular CWTSa and DWTSA allotments. For any regular CWTSa funds made available this year, we and IHS will select projects for funding based on the normal process using the SDS list. For any regular DWTSA funds made available this year, we will fund projects based on the FY 08 DWTSA solicitation.

If you have questions, please call Linda Reeves at (415) 972-3445 about the DWTSA funds, or Loretta Vanegas at (415) 972-3433 about the CWTSa funds.

Sincerely yours,

 22 January 2009
Alexis Strauss
Director, Water Division